

Executive Committee

Minutes

Friday, 6 June 2025 (14:00 – 16:00 CET)

Copa Cogeca (Meeting Room B), Rue de Trèves 61, 1040 Brussels

Interpretation in EN, ES, FR

Welcome from the Chair, Yobana Bermúdez

Adoption of the agenda and of the last meeting's minutes (28.03.25): Approved

Presentation

Action points

- **State-of-play of the action points of the last meeting - information**
- Planning of Meetings:
 - Secretariat to proceed with the organisation of meetings, in a hybrid format, in September 2025, in Gran Canaria (Spain), including a joint General Assembly meeting with the Outermost Regions Advisory Council
 - Planning for meetings for 16-18 September 2025 in Gran Canaria ongoing
- External Representation:
 - Secretariat to circulate a proposal of mandate for the 8 and 9 April 2025 Inter Advisory Councils via written procedure
 - Mandate agreed on 4 April 2025

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) recalled the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC) would be holding a meeting, in online format, of their General Assembly on 16 September 2025. Mr Ojeda asked about the possibility of avoiding an overlapping of the timing of the meetings, to facilitate the attendance by common members.

The Secretary General responded that the issue had been discussed with the Secretariats of the AAC and of the Outermost Regions Advisory Council (CCRUP). As the joint meeting of the MAC and the CCRUP would take almost all day, it would be difficult to avoid overlapping with the meeting of the AAC. The Secretary General committed to discussing the matter once more with the AAC Secretariat.

Strategy for EU External Fisheries Action

- **Presentation on the preparation of the upcoming communication by Fernando Andresen Guimarães (Director, MARE B), including:**
 - Sustainable value chains and trade



- Fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
- Market contribution of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements

Fernando Andresen Guimarães (DG MARE) drew attention to the new geopolitical environment and the need to explore the opportunities for the EU. At the multilateral level, there was a change in the dynamics with the emergence of a more vocal group of players who have become increasingly critical of the EU. These developments occurred against the backdrop of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which provides an incidental but important context. Besides Russia, other States impacted the changing dynamics.

Mr Guimarães underscored that multilateral engagement in ocean governance and fisheries remained a priority, as outlined in the mission letter of Commissioner Kadis. The European Ocean Pact was adopted and onward the focus would be on implementation, including of the external dimension aspects. The mission letter also foresees the development of a new strategic approach for EU external fisheries action, as a communication from the Commission, which is planned to be published in 2026. The Commission will also be launching a new generation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements. The Director encouraged the MAC to provide input on the mentioned initiatives.

Mr Guimarães emphasised that, under the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference, fisheries policy would be a key topic, including exchanges on sustainable value chains of fishery and aquaculture products. At the conference, the European Commission would be presenting the European Ocean Pact. From the EU's side, the aim would be to continue advancing ocean partnerships and to promote the entry into force of the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). Important issues related to ocean and fisheries policy were also addressed at recent meetings of the G7 and G20. The Director highlighted that first phase of the World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies was close to reaching the necessary number of ratifications to enter into force. He expressed hope that agreement on a comprehensive second phase of the agreement would be reached. The Port State Measures Agreement and the Fish Stock Agreement continued to be priorities.

Regarding sustainable value chains and trade, Mr Guimarães recalled that the EU market relies substantially on imports. Therefore, even though stability was crucial, it was also important to consider the sustainability of imports, an issue of increasing concern. The Director argued that it was necessary to strengthen the sustainability of the EU's import regimes. These are also complemented with other instruments, such as the Due Diligence Directive, the Forced Labour Regulation, and labour and environmental provisions in Free Trade Agreements. The Commission was also considering the introduction of sustainability criteria under the Autonomous Tariff Quotas regime. The aim would be to reach a better level-playing-field for the EU fleet, which is subject to strong sustainability requirements. To guarantee food security, it was important to look into steady supplies, diversification, and reduction of dependency for critical commodities, while also promoting sustainable EU fisheries and the sustainable growth of EU aquaculture.

Mr Guimarães thanked the members for the advice on the potential integration of sustainability criteria under the Autonomous Tariff Quotas regime. In his view, in the context of the regime, sustainability needed to be addressed, while also recognising the added value of the regime for the EU economy and operators. The objective was to respect the three pillars of sustainability, while also respecting the rules of the World Trade Organisation. A public consultation on the matter would be open until 3 July 2025.



Mr Guimarães explained that revision of Regulation 1026/2012 on certain measures for the purpose of the conservation of fish stocks in relation to countries allowing non-sustainable fishing would be subject of political agreement between the co-legislators soon after. In his view, the Regulation was a key element to act against unsustainable fishing practices by third countries. The legislative revision would provide more clarity on the use of trade measures, covering all sea basins and stocks, including the areas of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations. The aim of the Commission would be to collaborate at the international level to promote good management and fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The Commission would also be ensuring the compatibility of the instrument with the rules of the World Trade Organisation.

Mr Guimarães mentioned that the sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia due to the war of aggression against Ukraine were impacting the market. The Director expressed disappointment with the tariffs imposed by the USA, which were negatively impacting the entire international system. The Commission would continue to seek a negotiated resolution with the USA, while remaining ready to apply countermeasures. Furthermore, the Commission was aiming to finalise Free Trade Agreements with various interested countries. In the negotiations with India, there was a gap on the provisions on sustainability, but he expressed hope that it would be possible to resolve. Negotiations with ASEAN countries, including Indonesia, Thailand, and Philippines, were moving forward, even though there were still issues related to IUU fishing, market access for tuna products, market access quotas, and rules of origin. He welcomed the input from the MAC on the described matters.

Mr Guimarães stressed that the fight against IUU fishing remained a priority for the Commission. There were several dialogues ongoing with third countries on IUU matters, in line with the mandate to maintain the EU's leadership on this fight and to maintain a zero-tolerance approach, including through the use of "yellow" and "red cards". The Director recalled that, following the recent revision of the Fisheries Control Regulation, from 10 January 2026, EU operators and authorities would be required to use the CATCH IT system. In his view, the new system would allow for an increased level-playing-field, preventing fraudulent documentation, and facilitating traceability. He informed that the Commission was working with third countries to promote interoperability, particularly with the major trade partners. He encouraged the members to promote the use of CATCH among their constituencies.

Mr Guimarães highlighted the efforts to increase the transparency and resilience of the next generation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements. The Director welcomed the input provided on these efforts. He recalled that these agreements represent a total of 9% of the EU catches, representing 24% of the highly migratory species. Therefore, it was important to make these agreements even more dynamic and strategic.

- **Exchange of views**

Guus Pastoor (AIPCE) drew attention to the high dependency of the EU market from third countries. Out of the 12 million tonnes of fishery and aquaculture products consumed yearly in the EU, 4 million tonnes came from EU production, including merely 1 million tonnes from EU aquaculture. Mr Pastoor expressed support for the ambition to increase the EU's self-sufficiency rate but argued that it was necessary to be realistic.



Worldwide, the consumption of fishery and aquaculture products was growing, while the population was also expected to grow. Therefore, the EU's self-sufficiency rate would likely reduce.

Mr Pastoor wondered about how aquaculture production could be stimulated in the EU. He asked for information on the quantity of catches by the EU fleet in the waters of third countries were coming back to the EU market. Concerning the potential introduction of sustainability criteria under the Autonomous Tariff Quotas regime, he argued that the focus should be on "hot spots", as a significant quantity of imports came from countries with good fisheries management systems.

Fernando Andresen Guimarães (DG MARE) recognised that full self-sufficiency would not be possible but argued that efforts should be made to reduce the dependency on a small number of suppliers. In his view, it was important to diversify suppliers, particularly in a belligerent international environment. Mr Guimarães argued that it was necessary to ensure that both EU production and imports are sustainable, including by ensuring sustainable sourcing. The Director highlighted that the EU's policy on IUU focused on "hot spots" but added that it was necessary to go broader. On the quantity of catches coming from activities in the waters of third countries, he added that it would be addressed in the next generation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements.

Luis Molledo (DG MARE) drew attention to the significance of the new political moment, as there was a new College of Commissioners and a new European Parliament. The Commission was mandated to develop a new generation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements, which meant it was important to consider the relationship between landings, imports, and supply to the EU market. Mr Molledo expressed his willingness to receive input on how to ensure that more supply from the agreements reached the EU market.

Patrick Murphy (IS&WFPO) welcomed the emphasis on sustainability for fishers but added that it should also be about sustainability for coastal fishing communities. Mr Murphy drew attention to the different challenges faced by each country and the differences in quota allocations across the EU. The fleet faced a decline from 400 fishing vessels to merely 140. He underscored the importance of a viable future for fishers and of engaging with younger generations.

Fernando Andresen Guimarães (DG MARE) agreed that it was important to ensure the sustainability of coastal communities, particularly in the context of the competitiveness of the EU's blue economy. Mr Guimarães emphasised that those issues were key in the European Ocean Pact and that the Commission would continue to work in that direction.

Vanya Vulperhorst (Oceana) congratulated the European Commission for the adoption of the European Ocean Pact. Ms Vulperhorst expressed support for the introduction of sustainability criteria under the Autonomous Tariff Quotas regime, adding that, while there was sourcing from sustainable sources, that was not always the case. Ms Vulperhorst argued that Member States needed to do better on import controls and stop high risk and illegal imports. She wanted to know whether the Commission was planning a more holistic framework on the sustainability of imports, particularly since the Sustainable Food System Framework was not moving forward.



Fernando Andresen Guimarães (DG MARE) drew attention to the ongoing work for a strategy for external EU fisheries action. Mr Guimarães added that there was a clear view on the existing tools.

Luis Molledo (DG MARE) stated that, while the Commission was not pursuing an overarching framework, there were several instruments working together, including the IUU Regulation, the sustainability provisions of Free Trade Agreements, the Due Diligence Directive, and the initiative to introduce sustainability criteria under the Autonomous Tariff Quotas regime. Mr Molledo added that it was also necessary to account for the constraints imposed by the World Trade Organisation.

Janne Posti (Conxemar) wanted to know whether the Commission would launch a public consultation on the planned strategy for external EU fisheries action.

Fernando Andresen Guimarães (DG MARE) replied that a call for evidence would be published in the near future. There would be several opportunities to provide input until the publication of the communication in 2026.

Aodh O'Donnell (Irish Fish Producers Organisation) congratulated Directorate B for the efforts to tackle unsustainable practices by third countries, which, due to overfishing and inflation of quotas, was damaging the sustainability of stocks. Mr O'Donnell provided the example of the shared mackerel stocks. He argued that, due to the economic and social importance of this matter, trade measures were needed to protect the interests of Ireland and of other coastal States.

Daniel Voces (Europêche) thanked Mr Guimarães for the work on the strategy for EU external fisheries action, particularly in the context of the existing self-sufficiency challenges. Mr Voces argued that it was necessary to account for the competitiveness of the EU fleet as well as for the optimisation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements.

In relation to the proposal to transpose the BBNJ Agreement, mentioned in the European Ocean Pact, Mr Voces drew attention to the “non-undermining principle”, arguing that it was necessary to work with existing frameworks, including the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, to avoid conflicts and loss of knowledge.

Regarding the World Trade Organisation’s Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, Mr Voces wondered whether it would be realistic to expect an agreement on the second phase, considering the difference in approach from the USA authorities. He wanted to know whether the Commission would proceed ahead with the transposition of the first phase of the agreement into EU law.

Mr Voces welcomed the revision of Regulation 1026/2012. He wanted to know whether the regulation would only be used in relation to the fishing grounds of the Atlantic Ocean or whether it could be used in other waters, for example the Mediterranean Sea.

Fernando Andresen Guimarães (DG MARE) explained that Regulation 1026/2012 was applicable to all sea basins and fish stocks, not only the Atlantic Ocean. Regarding the relationship between the BBNJ Agreement and Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, Mr Guimarães stressed that these organisations provide



a strong basis for the implementation of the agreement, so respecting the “non-undermining principle” was clear for the Commission.

Regarding the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, Mr Guimarães replied that the Commission was ready to transpose the first phase into EU law, as soon as the agreement enters into force. As for the second phase, the Director stated that reaching agreement had been close, but that one party broke the consensus. The text proposed by the chair of the discussions was agreeable in most parts to the EU and to many other parties. While there were many factors coming into play, the Commission remained committed.

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) argued that the EU’s low self-sufficiency rate would not change in the short or long-term. Mr Ojeda argued that the main issue with imports is the impact on the prices and sustainability of EU production. The aquaculture sector wants to produce more in the EU. He added that, as long as there is a level-playing-field, the EU sector would not have a problem with imports.

Fernando Andresen Guimarães (DG MARE) emphasised that aquaculture was at the heart of the European Ocean Pact, as growing the EU aquaculture sector was key to respond to several challenges.

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) commented that he was not fully satisfied with the European Ocean Pact. In his view, several options were missed.

Fernando Andresen Guimarães (DG MARE) responded that the European Ocean Pact was a framework, but that several actions would still be needed. He expressed willingness to receive feedback from the MAC.

- **Way forward**

The Secretary General, suggested, as a way forward, to wait for the Commission’s call for evidence. Once the call was published, the Secretariat would circulate a questionnaire to collect input from the members. The aim would be for the relevant Working Group to consider draft advice at the September 2025 meetings.

Working Groups

- **Reporting on Working Group 1**

The Secretary General informed that, at the meeting of 5 June 2025 of Working Group 1:

- A representative of MARE A4 delivered an update on the development of the voluntary sustainability tool for fishery products, which would be moving forward to beta testing.
- The latest edition of the Aquaculture Economic Report was presented by the Chair of the responsible Expert Working Group. The Working Group would be proceeding with advice for the Terms of Reference of the next edition of the report.
- The members considered draft advice on suggestions for the next work programme of EUMOFA. As there were still pending points, the Working Group would be proceeding with a written procedure.



- Following the meeting of March 2025 and two written procedures, the members considered again draft advice on the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy. As there were still pending points, the Working Group would be proceeding with an urgent written procedure.

- **Reporting on Working Group 2**

Pierre Commère (AIPCE) informed that, at the meeting of 6 June 2025 of Working Group 2:

- Representatives of MARE B3 delivered an update on the latest trade developments, including on the negotiation of free trade agreements with Indonesia and Thailand, the entry into force of the free trade agreement with Mercosur, and the impact of the new USA tariffs. The representatives also provided an update on the public consultation on the potential integration of sustainability criteria under the Autonomous Tariff Quotas regime.
- A representative of MARE B3 provided information on the EU's mandate for the next session of the FAO's Sub-Committee on Fish Trade. The Secretariat will follow up with MARE B3 for additional information. The Secretariat will also circulate a questionnaire to collect input for future advice on the matter.
- Laure Guillevic (WWF) presented the outcomes of the Fish-X project, particularly focusing on the traceability elements.
- Representatives of MARE B4 provided an overview of the existing procedures and dialogues with third countries on IUU. The representatives also provided an update on the implementation of the CATCH IT system.
- As an AOB, a representative of MARE D4 provided an update on the study feasible traceability systems and procedures for prepared and preserved fishery and aquaculture products.

- **Reporting on Working Group 3**

The Secretary General informed that, at the meeting of 5 June 2025 of Working Group 3:

- An expert of EUMOFA presented a study on the challenges of aquaculture products in food outlets, which originated from a recommendation of the MAC.
- A representative of Eurofish delivered a presentation on the valorisation of side and waste streams of fishery and aquaculture products.
- The members considered draft advice on the upcoming "Vision for EU fisheries for 2040". As there were still pending points, the Working Group would be proceeding with an urgent written procedure.



- The members considered draft advice on the legislative proposal for the protection of animals during transport. As there were still pending points, the Working Group would be proceeding with an urgent written procedure.

External Representation

- **Reporting back on the following meetings:**
 - **Inter-AC Meeting with DG MARE (8 & 9 April 2025) by Christine Absil (Vice-Chair) and Pedro Reis Santos (Secretary General)**

The Secretary General recalled that, at the Inter-AC meeting of 8 and 9 April 2025, the MAC was represented by Christine Absil (Vice-Chair), Benoît Thomassen (Chair of Working Group 3) and himself. At the meeting, there was a roundtable on the “Vision for EU Fisheries in 2040” with Commissioner Kadis. The Vice-Chair made an intervention in line with the mandate previously agreed by the Executive Committee.

The Inter-AC meeting included a dialogue with DG MARE on key fisheries topics related to the Common Fisheries Policy. First, there was an exchange on other policies impacting the Common Fisheries Policy. At the meeting, the Secretary General, based on various pieces of advice previously adopted by the MAC, drew attention to issues related to food policy, the Common Agricultural Policy, trade, competitiveness, the Forced Labour Regulation, the Due Diligence Directive, and labelling and consumer rules.

Second, there was an exchange on the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy. At the meeting, the Secretary General, based on the draft advice on the evaluation, drew attention to various issues, including respect for the three pillars of sustainability, fair standard of living, supply, consumer information, Producer Organisations, stakeholder engagement, and fisheries control rules.

Thirdly, there was an exchange on the European Oceans Pact. At the meeting, the Secretary General, based on the mandate previously agreed by the Executive Committee for the high-level dialogue with the Commissioner, drew attention to issues on the Common Fisheries Policy and the Common Market Organisation, biodiversity, and fisheries control rules.

The Inter-AC meeting also included a dialogue with DGMARE on the planned EU fisheries external action, including an update on the new generation of Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements. At the meeting, the Secretary General delivered an intervention focused on the agreements, the fight against IUU fishing, and trade, in line with the mandate previously agreed by the Executive Committee.

- **EU Agri-Food Chain Observatory (11 April 2025) by Pedro Reis Santos (Secretary General)**

The Secretary General recalled that the MAC is an observer to the EU-Agri Food Chain Observatory and that he attended the meeting of 11 April 2025. The topics addressed included monitoring the agri-food supply chain, including costs indices for farmers, methodologies to calculate cost indices – the case of apples and cereals, and fostering market transparency by making data on the agri-food supply chain publicly available –



focus on fertilised. Therefore, the meeting did not cover topics of direct relevance for the market of fishery and aquaculture products.

- **Advisory Board and 20th Anniversary of the European Fisheries Control Agency (23 & 24 April 2025) by Daniel Voces (Representative), Guus Pastoor (Deputy Representative) and Pedro Reis Santos (Secretary General)**

The Secretary General recalled that the MAC is a member of the Advisory Board of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA). Daniel Voces (Europêche) is the main representative, while Guus Pastoor (AIPCE) is the deputy representative.

The Secretary General informed that the main representative and himself attended the 23 April 2025 meeting of the Advisory Board of EFCA. At the meeting, Mr Voces provided an update on recent work of the MAC related to fisheries control, including the recently adopted recommendations on consumer information, traceability of fresh and frozen products, and the annual economic report on the fishing fleet. Mr Voces also provided information on upcoming advice, including on IUU fishing in the Outermost Regions, and the implementation of import controls across the Member States.

The Secretary General further informed that the main representative, the deputy representative, and himself attended the 20th anniversary event held by EFCA on 24 April 2025. The event included a visit to the agency's offshore patrol vessels, several high-level speeches, and a roundtable titled "European fisheries control in the next 20 years and the role of EFCA".

- **European Maritime Day (21-23 May 2025) by Yobana Bermúdez (Chair) and Pedro Reis Santos (Secretary General)**

The Secretary General informed that, on 22 and 23 May 2025, he attended the European Maritime Day. In that context, he followed the Fisheries and Ocean Dialogues, the workshop "20 Years of Advisory Councils – Stakeholder Expertise for the Oceans Pact", various other workshops, and a session organised by EFCA titled "20 years of uniform and effective control and inspection".

The Secretary General further informed that the Chair was part of the panel of the workshop organised by the Advisory Councils. In that panel, Ms Bermúdez made an intervention about the success of the Advisory Councils, which was based on the findings of the 2022 performance review. She also made an intervention about the expectations for the European Ocean Pact, which was based on the mandate previously agreed by the Executive Committee.

The Chair commended the quality of the workshop jointly organised by the Advisory Councils. She drew attention to the large, including high-level, number of Commission representatives at the European Maritime Day, which demonstrated the relevance of attending the event.

- **Preparation for the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (Nice, 9-13 June 2025)**

The Secretary General recalled that Christine Absil (Vice-Chair) and himself attended the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference on behalf of the MAC and added that he would be attending the 2025 edition. The 2025



edition would include a “blue zone” with the plenary session and several side events as well as a “green zone” with a wide range of side events. Several topics of interest to the MAC were expected to be addressed, including food policy, nutrition, fight against IUU fishing, and trade. Additionally, the President of the European Commission would be presenting the European Ocean Pact.

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) commended the Secretary General for ensuring that the MAC would be represented.

AOB

None.



Summary of action points

- Planning of Meetings:
 - Secretariat to circulate additional information on the organisation of the September 2025 meeting in Gran Canaria (Spain).
- Strategy for EU External Fisheries Action:
 - Once the Commission's call for evidence is published, Secretariat to circulate a questionnaire to collect input from the members for the preparation of advice by Working Group 2.



Attendance List

Representative	Organisation	Role
Anna Rokicka	Polish Association of Fish Processors (PSPR)	Observer
Aodh O'Donnell	Irish Fish Producers Organisation	Observer
Camille Maisonneuve	Market Advisory Council (MAC)	Secretariat
Christine Absil	Good Fish Foundation	Member
Dominic Rihan	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO)	Member
Felicidad Fernández Alonso	ANFACO-CECOPECA	Member
Fernando Andresen Guimarães	European Commission	Expert
Giuseppe Scordella	COPA-COGECA	Member
Guus Pastoor	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE)	Member
Iñigo Azqueta Ruiz-Gallardón	FEICOPESCA	Observer
Ioannis Antonopoulos	European Commission	Expert
Janne Posti	Conxemar	Member
Javier Ojeda	Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP)	Member
Jean-Marie Robert	Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne	Member
John Lynch	Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation (ISEFPO)	Observer
Jules Danto	European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)	Member
Katarina Sipic	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE) / European Federation of National Organizations of Importers and Exporters of Fish (CEP)	Member
Kinga Malinowska-Facci	European Commission	Expert
Laure Guillevic	WWF	Member
Luis Molledo	European Commission	Expert
Patrick Murphy	IS&WFPO	Observer
Pawel Szatkowski	European Commission	Expert
Pedro Reis Santos	Market Advisory Council (MAC)	Secretariat
Pierre Commère	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE)	Member
Rosalie Tukker	Europêche	Member





Market Advisory Council

Representative	Organisation	Role
Thibault Pivetta	European Molluscs' Producers Association (EMPA)	Member
Vanya Vulperhorst	Oceana	Member
Yobana Bermúdez	EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (AIPCE)	Chair

